(c) the time by which it is likely to be set up?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Export policy on Agricultural products

2348. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the policies regarding export of agricultural products; and

(b) whether Government propose to take measures to increase the export of agricultural products?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Policy of exports of agricultural products forms an integral part of the Export Import Policy of the country. The policy regarding exports of agricultural products is governed principally by the concerns of Indna's food security, maximising farm incomes and earning foreign exchange. Review of export performance of agricultural products is an on-going process and accordingly policy interventions and made, as and when considered necessary, with a view to making agricultural exports increasingly viable.

(b) Some of the measures proposed to be taken to enhance exports of agricultural products include :—

Providing assistance for raising small and large nurseries for production of good quality planning material, upgradation of technical knowhow of farmers through demonstrations, training and publicity, rejuvenation of old orchards, area expansion, supply of minikits for vegetables and improving productivity.

2. Provision of soft loans for setting up of grading/processing centres, auction platforms, ripening/curing chambers and quality testing equipment.

3. Providing financial assistance to exporters/growers/Co-operative Societies for development of infrastructural facilities such as purchase of specialised transport units, establishment of pre-cooling/ cold storage facilities, integrated post-harvest handling systems (pack houses).

4. Grant of financial assistance for improved packaging, strengthening of quality control.

5. Establishment of vapour heat treatment facilities for improving the acceptability of the product especially the mangoes in overseas markets.

6. Arranging promotional campaigns such as buyer-seller meets and participation in important international fairs and exhibitions.

7. Setting up of integrated cargo handling and cold storage facilities at various International Airports for handling export of perishable items such as fresh fruits and vegetables.

8. Providing assistance for setting up of laboratories for testing of products to ensure quality; technology transfer; process upgradation and product development.

9. Providing assitance in development of data-base and dissemination of market information.

Coffee Plantation in Assam

2349. SHRI PRAKANTA WARISA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any comprehensive scheme for cultivation of coffee plantation in the fertile land available in different parts of the State of Assam for the benefits of unemployed youth;

(b) if so, the district-wise/location-wise details including the full area of Assam for the said purpose;

(c) the total funds allotted by Government for the purpose during the current financial year and Ninth Plan; and

(d) the effective measures being taken or proposed to be taken by Government for implementation of the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) No, Sir. There is no exclusive scheme for unemployed youth. However, under the 'Special Package for Coffee Development in North-East Region' during the IXth Five Year Plan, a total area of 3650 ha. is proposed to be covered in Assam. The areas brought under Coffee are mainly located in Karbianglong, North Cachar Hills and Golpara Districts of Assam State.

(c) For implementation of the above package in the entire North-Eastern Region, an amount of Rs. 11.07 crores and Rs. 2.20 crores has been allocated for IXth Five Year Plan and current financial year (1998-99) respectively.

(d) For monitoring extension and coffee developmental activities in the North-Eastern Region, the Board has its extension network in this region. Further, a post of Joint Director (Extension) with Headquarters at Shilong and Senior Liason Officer at Tura have also been created during 1997 for overseeing implementation of the Special Area Programme. The programme is being implemented in close coordination with State Govt. agencies like the Forest Development Corporation, Soil Conservation Department and the North East Council.

Secretary Level talks between India and Nepal

2350. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Secretary level talks between India and Nepal on checking the unauthorised trade across the open border were held in the recent past;

(b) if so, the details and outcome thereof;

(c) whether Indo-Nepalese transit treaty has been further renewed; and

(d) if so, the details of joint efforts made by India and Nepal to check illegal trade between both the countries?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) to (d) The Commerce Secretary level talks between India and Nepal were held in New Delhi on 17—20 November, 1998. The focus of discussions was on renewal of Indo-Nepal Treaty of Transit which was to expire on 5th January 1998. It has been agreed to renew the existing Treaty of Transit with mutually agreed modifications. Pending the formal renewal of Treaty of Transit, it has been agreed that the validity of the existing Treaty shall be extended by one month i.e. upto 5th January, 1999 or till the date of its formal renewal whichever is earlier.

The need for checking the unauthorised trade across the Indo-Nepal border was also underlined during the discussions and the two Governments agreed to cooperate with each other to control it.

Export Warehousing Scheme

2351. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently cleared the proposal for export warehousing scheme;

(b) if so, the details of the scheme and likely impact thereof;

(c) the details of other fresh initiatives taken under consideration to boost up exports; and

(d) the details of system reforms effected/under consideration for export promotion during the current year?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) Export warehousing scheme was notified under Export & Import Policy issued on 13.4.98. The scheme allows the